

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### THE PROTECTION OF THE EMBLEM OF THE RED CROSS

WE wish to say a few words to our friends in the hospitals of New York State and elsewhere who have been making use of the Geneva or red cross as a means of raising funds on "tag days" and similar occasions in innocent (no doubt) but express violation of the charter rights of the American National Red Cross and of our treaty obligations as a nation.

It is probable that the hospitals are not aware that they are misusing the insignia of the Red Cross, still less that in doing so they are injuring the Red Cross itself. They have found other persons and institutions using the red cross and doubtless have thought it harmless for them to use it, especially for a purpose more or less like that of the Red Cross. When they learn that the red cross is the common symbol of all army hospital corps and auxiliary Red Cross societies which protect the sick and injured and the hospital personnel and material from attack in time of war, and that now, all over the world it has come to cover and signify this special and official kind of protection, relief and prevention of sickness and injury in war, disaster and pestilence, they will realize that it cannot be used loosely without having its usefulness seriously impaired.

Emergency relief, indeed, on the large scale which the Red Cross has to undertake in times of calamity can only be organized through long previous preparation. It is in part as a preparation for its other duties that it has embraced this year what is, perhaps, the greatest mission of all, that of combating tuberculosis, which slays its hundreds where war slays its tens. Preparation is a question of educating and rousing the people to protect themselves. It cannot be done in a minute.

Millions of dollars are needed before a tolerable condition of preparedness can be reached. The problem of stopping the terrible drain of life and power is a vital one to America and the assistance of all her children is needed, not only in the multitude of important special ways of which the hospitals are worthy examples, but in other larger general and more inclusive modes.

Only those concerned with questions of a large and general nature know how difficult it is to secure and hold the popular attention to a subject after the crisis has passed. It is particularly difficult to make our American people realize that war and disaster and pestilence are coming again and again to exact their frightful harvest of death and suffering, unless something is done to check them, and that it is infinitely more merciful (as well as sensible) to take pains for prevention than for belated relief. The need of a symbol which shall recall and summarize to the popular mind what has been done along this line and what remains to be done is plainly apparent. Its significance is what gives it its value. This is why the hospitals like to use the picturesque Geneva cross and precisely why they should not use it. Every misuse makes for confusion and the loss through confusion falls ultimately and heavily upon the people themselves, whose organization the Red Cross is.

Our national Red Cross is not, as some people imagine, a private and exclusive society. It is, instead, the whole people organized for the purpose of preventing suffering and loss of life. Everybody, man, woman, or child, may become a member and have a voice in it. It is public and official: one-third of the members of the Central Committee are appointed by the President of the United States, the finances are audited by the War Department and a report is annually made to Congress. It is linked with the Red Cross societies of forty-two other nations, whose total membership is upward of five million members.

It may be asked, perhaps, why with this important rôle, the Red Cross has not been given power to protect itself. The answer is that it has been given such power. By an act of Congress, January 5, 1905, the misuse of the red cross is made a misdemeanor, punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both. Although the Red Cross has power to prosecute, it feels it better to be merciful here, also. The abuse of the red cross is not of recent standing. Many persons and institutions are using it in innocent ignorance of the injury they are causing. Moreover, the Red Cross has not until recently made an attempt to protect its insignia. It has depended upon the loyalty of the people. Our people, however, are a busy people, engrossed to a large extent in their

own affairs, and something in the nature of a reminder seems to be needed. We beg the hospitals which have the interest almost of kinship in the Red Cross to help secure the latter in its emblem. The Department of Charities of New York City, thanks to Commissioner Hebbard, and Bellevue and Allied Hospitals of New York City have set a splendid example to the hospitals of the country by changing from the red cross to the symbol of *Æsculapius*, and it is already bearing fruit. Will not the members of the hospital boards, as distinguished and enlightened members of the community, do as much?

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#### THE VALUE OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

SOMETIMES nurses whose experience has been confined to large teaching hospitals find occasion to criticize the scientific value of the practical papers published in our pages. Our effort has been and still is to obtain from the women of broad practical experience in the home, papers written as a result of such experience which will be of assistance to the private duty nurse in her daily round. We want to say, however, to those of our readers whose training has been more complete, that when a paper is published which does not give in full the very latest knowledge on a subject, it should be rounded out and supplemented by further contributions from those who see where the writer's knowledge has been limited, thus carrying on the subject from month to month and adding greatly to the value of the JOURNAL as a means of graduate study.

When all has been said, we have to realize that there are limits to the variety of nursing subjects. It is a kind of occupation which repeats itself over and over, and our contributions must contain something of repetition as the years go on. To keep in touch with such changes in nursing technic as are developed through the change in medical progress, is about all there is new to be recorded, aside from the knowledge gained by practical women as a result of the experience of years.

Our contributions from women in the field of private duty have increased very greatly in number and quality during the last six months, one of the most gratifying experiences which the editorial board has to record. It is an indication of true professional growth, as the ability to produce literature is one of the recognized tests that a calling is becoming worthy of professional recognition. The criticism which we have heard made frequently, that nursing is not a profession because it has produced no literature, is rapidly being refuted by the character of

contributions from our practical workers and by the text-books which are coming more frequently from the pens of nurses.

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#### OUTINGS

DURING the long summer days when wood and field and stream invite one to be lazy and to store up strength for the future, our thoughts dwell with compassion on the many nurses who, for some good reason or other, cannot run away from sick-room sights and sounds, but must stay at the post of duty, taking temperatures, giving medicines, handing instruments, making solutions, giving baths, while the heat oppresses them, and their chosen work almost loses its interest.

All such should seize every opportunity which offers itself for a small outing, since the larger one is denied. A walk in a park, or, if one's feet are too tired for that, an hour's rest on a park bench, watching the babies and the birds, a boat ride, a street car ride which carries one away from the city, all these give a little lift to one's spirits and a little fresh vigor for toil.

The night nurse should make a special effort to get out into the fresh air each morning before her day's sleep, so that the whole summer may not slip past her unnoticed and unknown, as sometimes happens.

The effort to preserve a happy spirit will add much to one's comfort. A chafing, rebellious mind, added to the heat and confinement, will make its owner even more miserable than she need be.

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#### THE TUBERCULOSIS CONGRESS

GREAT interest is being shown all over the country in the congress and the special session for nurses. The latter will probably fall on the first of October, and there may even be an overflow meeting. A number of papers have been promised and some have come in, but in the uncertainty that attends programs it seems better to wait until the September issue of the *JOURNAL* before attempting to give the complete list of papers.

We may say once more, here, that any nurse in any part of the country who has anything useful to contribute from her own experience, need not wait to be asked to write, but may send it in with the assurance that it will be welcome.

The Committee of the Nurses' Session has added Mrs. Lystra E. Gretter, head of the Visiting Nurse Association of Detroit, to its mem-

bers. Mrs. Gretter writes with the utmost hopefulness of the anti-tuberculosis crusade in that city.

Miss Strong, chairman of the Nurses' Exhibit Committee of the International Tuberculosis Congress, is sending letters to the state associations asking that they contribute toward expenses. As it is necessary to raise at least one thousand dollars it is hoped a prompt response with enclosure will be received.

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#### HEALTH PROGRESS IN MICHIGAN

THE State Department of Health in Michigan is one of the most active and earnest in the country and its bulletins are always valuable and interesting. The latest one, issued in May, which is the seventh on preventable diseases, gives tables showing the prevalence of nine dangerous communicable diseases during each month of this year and a comparison with the average per month during 1904-1906. From this table one can see that tuberculosis is increasing, while the other diseases reported, pneumonia, typhoid fever, diphtheria, meningitis, whooping-cough, scarlet fever, measles and smallpox are decreasing. The campaign being steadily carried on by this board to educate the people and to induce doctors to report diseases and take measures for their extermination ought to be rewarded by just such results.

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#### INFORMATION WANTED AS TO SCHOOL-HOUSE INSPECTION

THE question of cleaning school-houses and securing adequate sanitary conditions in them, has for a long time perplexed those in a position to know of the general lack of hygienic conditions that exist in many or most of them. To this end, we are asked by a nurse on the Committee on Janitor Service in the public schools of a large eastern city to ask our readers to come forward with any practical suggestions which would help in solving this problem. The public schools in many communities are only superficially cleaned; supervision of such cleaning is not systematic, nor enforced by such people as would be likely to recognize the hygienic value of it. The janitors often have entirely too much to do, so that at best their work must be inadequate to the proper needs of the building. The question of proper cleaning of closets and lavatories, supplying fresh towels, regulation of the height of seats in closets for use by small children, and so forth, is one on which nurses, school nurses especially, might well have valuable suggestions to offer. The most glaring defects in the sanitary cleaning of school

buildings, and their greatest needs, as they strike individual observers, is what we want to elicit in the way of replies. A nurse on a tour of inspection and investigation in a hospital or factory can make good suggestions as to conditions of light, ventilation, and cleanliness, and can see many defects that a layman would not have noticed. All nurses, therefore, who have anything to say, or criticisms to offer as to methods concerning hygienic or non-hygienic conditions in the public schools, are asked to come forward freely with their remedies and suggestions, which are greatly needed in one city, and perhaps in several.

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#### CONVENTION ECHOES AND FORECASTS

ALTHOUGH the eleventh annual convention of the Associated Alumnae is but just over, plans for the twelfth are being pushed forward so rapidly and enthusiastically that already it begins to seem a reality.

The superintendents have generously laid aside their plan for meeting in New York and will, instead, convene in Minnesota, so we may hope for a meeting of the Federation of Nurses once more, that is, a day given to a meeting together of the Superintendents' Society and the Associated Alumnae, the two bodies composing the Federation.

It will be a great undertaking for the Minnesota nurses to entertain two such bodies, and it is delightful to hear that Iowa is showing a sisterly feeling and is offering to help, as shown in their report on another page. One of the Iowa workers writes: "If every nurse in the United States could attend even one National Convention, we would have no more indifference. The meeting next year at the Twin Cities will do endless good for the middle west. The Iowa nurses are planning that their state convention shall meet just before the national, and that the members shall then go from Dubuque in a body, by special boat up the Mississippi."

Already North Carolina and Iowa have chosen their delegates, and now that the doors of membership have been thrown open to city and county associations, we hope that they will throng in and that our national association will become more truly representative than ever before.

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#### THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

WE have received the preliminary announcement of the tenth annual conference of the American Hospital Association, which is to be held at Toronto, September 22-25. An unusual number of papers written by

nurses will be presented: "The Inspection of Nurse Training Schools," by Anna L. Alline; "Some Problems of the Training School for Nursing," Adelaide Nutting; "Relation of the Training School to Hospital Efficiency," Charlotte A. Aikens; and "The Relation Between the Superintendent and the Staff," E. McL. Patton. These and others to be given by doctors or hospital superintendents, etc., promise an interesting and valuable meeting.

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#### A NEW BUREAU TO BE OPENED

At a recent meeting of the directors of *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* it was decided to open in the near future a bureau for securing institutional positions for nurses and nurses for hospital positions. This will be conducted through the office of the business manager, and suggestions are asked for from superintendents and others interested as to how it can be made most helpful. These should be addressed to Miss M. E. P. Davis, care *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*, 227 South Sixth Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

